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SUBJECT: CNDP COMPLAINS ABOUT ITS EXCLUSION FROM NEW GDRC

REF: KINSHASA 250; KIGALI 120; KINSHASA 218

¶1. (SBU) CNDP President Philippe Gafishi met with Goma-based diplomats (France, EU, Netherlands and Goma poloff) on February 23 to brief them on the GDRC reshuffle (ref C). Gafishi opened by stressing that all parties to the March 23 Agreements must follow the peace process to the end. The CNDP viewed the agreement as a roadmap, which all sides must commit to implement. During a February 22 press conference in Goma, the CNDP expressed disappointment at the lack of political integration reflected in the cabinet reshuffle. Integration, according to the CNDP, had been one of the most important elements of the accords and President Kabila had promised to integrate the CNDP into the government.

¶2. (SBU) Although the CNDP had been excluded from any ministerial posts in Kinshasa, it was satisfied with the Tripartite Agreement (refs A and B) and the timetable established for the return of refugees, Gafishi stated. Gafishi called for international community engagement to ensure the timetable would be respected.

¶3. (SBU) Gafishi also raised CNDP claims, originally made in January, that approximately 250 of its former soldiers integrated into the FARDC, had been "mistreated," then killed by FARDC elements, while on mission to Dungu in Haut Uele. A further CNDP grievance, according to Gafishi, was Kabila's refusal to sign an order confirming a commission report recommending grades to be assigned to CNDP elements integrated into the military and police. On another topic, while the CNDP war wounded were finally receiving treatment at a Masisi hospital, there was no care for combatants' widows and orphans. Gafishi criticized the Stabilization and Reconstruction Plan for Eastern Congo (STAREC) as a unilateral GDRC initiative (Note: a CNDP participant in STAREC was present at the briefing. End note). CNDP members, he claimed, had been fired from government jobs because of their party affiliation. Gafishi stressed in English that "there is a long way to go."

¶4. (SBU) Gafishi said it would be important in 2010 to neutralize the FDLR to ensure peace and security in the region. He lamented, however, that the FARDC was poorly trained and equipped. Gafishi suggested the creation of a special police force to ensure the security of returning refugees (Comment: This is a tacit admission that reinsertion of Congolese Tutsi refugees may prove more difficult than the CNDP publicly claims. End comment).

¶5. (SBU) As for CNDP electoral prospects, Gafishi refuted those

who believe the CNDP will turn into "another RCD-Goma" with little electoral support outside of the North Kivu Tutsi community. The CNDP, Gafishi claimed, has support in all provinces and therefore it does not fear the electoral process.

¶6. (SBU) Comment: Gafishi's grievances are the traditional CNDP complaints. The CNDP would have liked to receive senior posts, including a ministerial portfolio, in the cabinet reshuffle. Unsurprisingly, it has publicly voiced its disappointment. Nevertheless, the CNDP continues to maintain a very strong position in North Kivu - politically, economically, and even militarily with "integrated" CNDP units continuing to report to their former CNDP commanders. Given such a position, in our view, the exclusion of the CNDP from key posts in the national government will not provoke an armed response. For now, the biggest tripwire for a resumption of armed conflict remains the possibility of a haphazard and sudden return of refugees to the North Kivu. End comment.
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